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# CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

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# CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

## A CONTRAST

BY

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# PREFACE

In this little volume large subjects are treated of necessity very inadequately for want of space. To do justice to such problems as Matter, Reality, the Constitution of Man, the Subconscious Self, Suggestion, and the relation of the Physical and the Spiritual, all of which are touched upon here, would need volumes. Of these, I have already treated Matter and Reality at some length in my earlier book, "The Truth and Error of Christian Science," and the Constitution of Man somewhat more fully in "Theosophy and Christianity." Slight as the treatment here of these great subjects must be, it is hoped it may prove helpful to such as have no time for studying them more thoroughly for themselves.

M. C. S.

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# CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT IS CHRISTIAN SCIENCE?

In the early sixties of the last century a Dr. Quimby in America discovered that he had the power of healing sick persons without the use of drugs or other physical means. Whether he was very often successful or not it is impossible to say, since we do not know upon how many he tried this method of healing, nor how many failures he had. But he was successful frequently enough to set him thinking much upon the subject. It was clear that he used some mental or spiritual means, but he was puzzled to account for it. Very naturally he was anxious to explain it to himself as well as to others. He found that, at least in some instances, if he assured his patient that he or

she had nothing whatever the matter, the patient recovered. We should now explain this probably as due to "suggestion," of which we shall speak by and by, but at that time very little was known by people generally about the power of mental suggestion and of its effects upon the body. At any rate, Dr. Quimby would seem to have known little about it. Consequently, when he was successful with a cure of this kind, he arrived at the conclusion that the patient had in reality had nothing the matter with him, and that he had only thought himself ill or imagined it. He then came to the further conclusion that in all cases of disease it was simply a matter of our thinking ourselves ill, and that could we cease so to think, we should find ourselves in perfect health. He therefore carefully taught to his few followers that disease has in fact no existence, and is merely a creation of our own mind, due to false thinking or somehow to a mistake in our way of looking at things.

One of his patients was a Mrs. Eddy, who, having had an accident, went to him for help, and appears to have been considerably relieved. She took up his idea about the non-reality of

disease very strongly, and worked the subject out in her own mind, with the result that, being a forcible woman, she produced a sort of systematized teaching about it which she called "Christian Science."

Having adopted Dr. Quimby's idea that there is in reality no such thing as disease, she carried the notion of non-existence a good deal further, and asserted that not only is there no such thing as a diseased body or one that has suffered injury, but that there is no such thing as a body at all, affirming that we only *think* we have a body, and that this thinking is entirely false. She finally enunciated her doctrines in a book of considerable bulk, which she called "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," and her system, as already said, she called "Christian Science." She was a woman of little education, with a singularly illogical mind; in fact, she had little power of consecutive reasoning at all. Consequently, the book was at first a mere jumble of almost disconnected thoughts, if we may trust the account given of it as at first written. She gave it, however, to a man with a good deal more reasoning power than herself, and he attempted

to put the contents of her book into some kind of order. But, even so, the confused way in which its doctrine is expounded, the want of ordinary logic, the strange inconsistency of one part of the book with another, even sometimes of one sentence with another on the same page, are such as often to render it unintelligible, and in many cases to hinder people altogether from continuing to read it.

Nevertheless, "Science and Health" has passed through very many editions, and is undoubtedly very widely read; the number of editions is, however, somewhat deceptive and conveys an exaggerated idea of the demand for the book, since it appears that a law laid down by the writer for her adherents—and she is obeyed as if she were a Pope—was that each one of them should buy a new copy every time a new edition came out, which must have had as a result that many of them possess some three hundred or more.

We have said that Mrs. Eddy denied not only disease as a reality, but also the existence of any body at all, healthy or otherwise. But she carried her theory of non-existence further still; for one of the main contentions of her

book is that there is no material world, that what we consider to be a Universe outside ourselves and consisting of what we call Matter is entirely an illusion, and due, like our belief in disease and in the body, merely to our false thinking. We will go into Mrs. Eddy's theory of Matter later on.

Meanwhile, we would inquire into the reason for the name she gave to her system and to her book. There is a half-humorous statement frequently made that her teaching is neither scientific nor Christian, and, as we ordinarily understand these words, there is much truth in it. However, we must be fair and try to understand the sense in which she uses these terms. It is certainly startling that she lays claim to her system of thought as being scientific. For as we generally understand the word "Science," it applies to the facts and natural laws of the physical universe, the very universe which she so emphatically denies to have any existence. When she uses the word "Science," she applies it to that which lies *beyond* the physical world, to Being, to God, to ultimate Reality, to just those objects of thought which lie beyond the ken of the physical sciences, to

those spiritual things which scientists themselves more and more acknowledge cannot be handled by their scientific methods—to those assumptions, in fact, which lie at the root of all our reasoned knowledge, but which cannot themselves be proved by our logical methods. Mrs. Eddy herself recognized this. For in one passage she speaks of the "true Science of God, though," she continues, "departing from the realm of the physical, as it must, some may deny its right to the name of Science;" [1] but she defends it on the ground that her teaching is based on "Divine Principle demonstrated according to a given rule, and subjected to proper tests." [2] Here she truly gives a definition of scientific knowledge as based on deductions from a given law, thus reducing our confused and natural apprehension of things to the ordered knowledge, the regular sequence of cause and effect which science, so far as it is able to go, gives us with such exactitude. But

[1] "Science and Health," p. 5. All references here given to "Science and Health" apply to the eightieth edition, and are correct for many others; but in later editions the pages have often been transposed, by the placing of chapters in a different order, rendering the references given incorrect as to the number of the page given.

[2] "Science and Health," p. 287.

where we are inclined to differ from her is as to whether her apprehension of Divine Principle (which is infinite and not to be truly apprehended by any human mind) can be regarded as adequate, whether she has demonstrated at all exactly any "given rule," and whether she has been able to subject it to the "proper tests," which will be enquired into later on.

The use of the name "Christian" and its applicability to her system is open to a great deal of controversy, and we shall be in a better position for discussing it presently. But her teaching relating to God as the Supreme Life and on the essentially spiritual nature of man is based without question upon Christianity. She also, at least in theory, accepts the Christian system of Ethics. On these grounds she considered her teaching to be Christian, although, as a matter of fact, it is in many and important respects much more in accord with certain Eastern religions than with Christianity. Accepting Christianity, however, as she does, in the sense mentioned above, she lays great stress on the Scriptures and on their importance, but considers that she gives a new and illuminating

re-interpretation to them, which accounts for the second part of the title of her book "with Key to the Scriptures." An important part of the service which she has founded for Christian Science worship is the reading of passages from the Bible side by side with passages from "Science and Health" which are supposed to be either parallel with the selections from the Bible or interpretative of them.

"Science and Health" is still the standard work on Christian Science and the main authority appealed to by its stricter adherents. It will, therefore, be the book mainly referred to here.

## CHAPTER II.[1]

### MRS. EDDY'S FIRST PRINCIPLE, AND HER DEDUCTIONS FROM IT.

1. THE first principle is that All is One; the One is Supreme Being—is God.

With this we shall find ourselves in entire agreement, our only puzzle being that it should seem to have been regarded as a new announcement, and our only regret that it is not more adequately treated.

2. From the principle that All is God, Mrs. Eddy deduces that All is Mind.

How far we are in agreement with this must depend upon what she means, and we mean, by Mind.

3. Since All is Mind, Mind alone is real.

4. Hence Matter is not real, has absolutely no existence whatever.

[1] This chapter is taken nearly as it stands from my book, "The Truth and Error of Christian Science."

We shall have carefully to examine what is meant by Matter, and what is meant by Real.

5. Since there is no Matter, there is no Material or Physical world; we only think there is. Our experience is entirely false when it tells us there are objects about us which we call things.

6. Equally there is no such thing as a physical body. So entirely non-existent are these things which we call our bodies, that we do not really need food;[1] nor can our bodies die, since there is nothing to die; nor can they be in any way affected by the so-called world, since, firstly, there is no body to be affected, and, secondly, there is no world to affect them. It is all nothingness.

7. It follows as a matter of course that there can be no bodily disease—we only think there is; alter the thought, and it will disappear.

Curiously enough, it would seem that there is such a thing as bodily health (although there is no body), since the entire book is written in order to teach us how to attain it.

[1] See, for instance, "Science and Health," p. 386: "The fact is, food does not affect the existence of man, and this becomes self-evident when we learn that God is our only Life."

As we have so powerful an impression that there is a material world, and that we have bodies which also are often out of health, Mrs. Eddy has to try to account for this. And here we get one of the greatest inconsistencies of her system, for the entire material world with all it contains, including our bodies, is, she maintains, the creation of a part of our being which she calls Mortal Mind; and yet we are emphatically told over and over again that Mortal Mind is *nothing*, although it somehow is able to create the complex and wonderful thing we call the world. If we could, she teaches, but destroy the creations of this false non-entity, Mortal Mind, by disbelieving in them, the world would disappear, and with it all its evil in the forms both of sin and disease. Would that the disappearance of these last were so easy!

Having given this short epitome of the main doctrines of Christian Science, it will be necessary to go into them in some detail, and it will also be interesting to try to discover, if we can, why it has spread with such rapidity that it now has countless thousands of adherents, with

many large buildings where its members meet together for worship and mutual edification all over America and England, and that it has also spread on the continent of Europe as well as in India.

As we have now touched upon the theory on which Christian Science is based, we will finish our discussion of that, as far as we have room for it, before we take up the more interesting part of the subject, namely, its practical bearing upon the healing of disease.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TEACHING ABOUT MATTER.

With the extreme emphasis which Christian Science lays upon the fact that Spirit is the supreme Reality, and that Life in its essence is spiritual and not material, we shall none of us be inclined to quarrel. The very great stress which it lays upon this truth is doubtless one of its attractions; for it is asserted over and over again with such force that it has had the very desirable result of enabling countless persons to realize that they are essentially spiritual beings who never had believed it or much thought about it before. Nevertheless, it seems strange that this should be announced as if it were something new. For here, certainly, Christian Science can lay claim to nothing original. The same teaching has prevailed in the East for countless ages, and Christianity, as

given in the Gospels and by St. Paul, is behind no religion in the emphasis it lays upon the Spiritual Life. But Christianity does so with a difference, and a very important one; for whilst asserting the Spiritual as the supreme Reality, it neither ignores the physical world, nor states it to be non-existent, nor mere illusion—a point to be taken up later when we more fully compare Christian Science with Christianity.

However, when Christian Science in the latter part of the last century first originated, much of the spiritual teaching of Christianity had been forgotten, or even denied, and a very materialistic mode of thought prevailed which denied the existence of God, the spiritual nature of man, and the existence of anything but the outer world and its laws. This had become so prevalent in all classes, and especially among the young, that the forcible reassertion made by the Christian Scientists of the Spiritual as the great Fact of Life did come to many as something almost new, and, being worded in a different and somewhat startling manner, it broke upon the mind with a fresh force and attracted much attention. It did really a very

considerable work in counteracting the prevailing materialism, and especially amongst those, and there were many, who had become materialists, not through scientific thought, but merely because it was the prevailing fashion of which the careless and unthinking easily availed themselves.

It is necessary, and only fair, to do Christian Science full justice in this, and one can but realize how very inadequately Christianity must have been taught, where taught at all (for many repudiated it), that the great spiritual truth thus emphasized by Mrs. Eddy should have seemed to so many something really new; and with it her much-emphasized assertion that we are, or can be, largely independent of the limitations of Matter and, in fact, rise above them in a very considerable degree. She taught, indeed, that we can overcome these limitations entirely, because she held that material things do not exist at all. It is this point that we need to consider carefully.

At the time that Christian Science sprang up, the ordinary idea of Matter in the minds of people generally was that it consisted, so to speak, of "hard lumps," of something quite solid

and impenetrable; so much so that we were held, by physical bonds we could not break, in total, or almost total, subjection to them. It was, therefore, believed that much of what happens to us could not be helped, but must be accepted with fatalistic resignation; especially so was it regarded in the matter of ill-health where physical means failed. There are still very many who think about material things in this manner.

Although Mrs. Eddy went much too far in the opposite direction, we really have to thank her for making popular what Natural Science has long taught—namely, that Matter does not consist of hard and solid impenetrable lumps, which are rigid and stiff and unmanageable. Mrs. Eddy had, it is true, the greatest contempt for Natural Science,[1] although, had she

[1] Take, for instance, such statements as "Physical Science is human knowledge—a law of mortal mind, a blind belief." —"Science and Health," p. 17. "There is no physical Science." "Human thought never projected the least portion of true Science."—"Science and Health," p. 19. "The definitions of law, material law, as given by Natural Science, represent a kingdom divided against itself; because these definitions portray law as physical."—"Science and Health," p. 12. This statement completely misunderstands Natural Science, which particularly emphasizes that its laws are not physical, can only be inferred by the mind as something hidden and non-physical; in fact, that they are mental conceptions.

known how to make use of it, or even known anything about it, which she did not, she would have found in its teaching some things that have a decided kinship with her own.

For Natural Science entirely repudiates the "hard lump" idea of the ordinary man, teaching that Matter really consists of immeasurably minute particles called atoms,[1] and that these atoms are not close together, but separated from each other by a distance which is larger than the size of the atoms themselves. Two or more atoms are held together by a powerful mutual attraction in minute groups called molecules. The relation in which these minute particles are held to each other by attraction may be stronger or weaker according to circumstances, being acted upon by such energies as heat or cold, and so on. In the case of a gas, the particles are held together so slightly as to cause a gas to appear a very ethereal thing; whilst in a liquid the mutual attraction is stronger, but still not so strong as to produce anything that seems rigid, but, on the contrary,

[1] To go into the further analysis of atoms as constituted of electrons, or, as some think, of "idea vortices," would be far too technical for our purpose, but it would demonstrate a still more ethereal idea of Matter.

fluid; whilst in what we call a solid, the attraction is extremely powerful, so that to all appearance the thing is impenetrable and hard, but hard only because we can by any ordinary means make very little impression upon it. Nevertheless, the particles are still not in actual contact, but only very forcibly attracted to each other. In the chemical laboratory there are various means of overcoming the attraction or of changing it, causing re-combinations of particles so as to produce different substances, or the conversion of a liquid into a gas, or a solid into a liquid, and so on. The passing of so powerful an energy as electricity through an apparent solid has very remarkable results in disintegrating the constituent parts.

Thus it is taught by Natural Science that Matter is a much less hard-and-fast thing than it seems to us, and a much more changeable thing if a sufficiently powerful force can be brought to bear upon it. In the light of this Emerson's famous lines—

> "And seeming-solid walls of use
> Open and flow,"

appear to express more than the mere dreams

of a poet where spiritual or psychic energies can be brought into play. At any rate here, in the Natural Science so much despised by Mrs. Eddy, there is at least room, as it were, for her teaching that Thought may be an energy which can act upon material things, although Natural Science would be very cautious in allowing this.

We have, then, found that Mrs. Eddy, along with the Easterns, expressed half a truth when she spoke of material things as illusions, since the idea of solidity which we attach to them is not a fact. But she goes much too far when, in her desire to prove that everything is Spirit or Mind, she asserts that there is nothing whatever which gives us the experience of what we call an outward and physical world. For if there is nothing actually solid in existence of the kind supposed by the ordinary man, yet undoubtedly something exists which gives us the impression of something solid—the energies, the attractions, exist with their peculiar action upon our impressions or feelings. It is of no use to say that they are mere creations of our own mind, since, if they were, we should not be subject to their limitations, but very speedily

have found out that they could be "thought away," especially as, where our experiences are disagreeable, it would be so greatly to our advantage to do so. With our ready powers of invention we should have very soon discovered so easy a way.

But with all our desire to escape from tiresome limitations, so real are these outward things, that the strongest believer in Christian Science has still to remain upon the surface of the earth, has still to climb over a wall, or knock it down, or go round it, or in some way to overcome it by physical means, the very means which, in Mrs. Eddy's teaching, have no existence, and are entirely unnecessary.

It is the fact that Mrs. Eddy so often expresses a half-truth which as far as it goes is so true that we must all admit it, as if it were a whole truth, which makes it so difficult to disentangle the true from the false in her assertions, and makes them so often misleading; for because one part of what she says is so obviously true, people who are not careful to study the matter take it for granted that all that she states must be true. It is therefore easy, especially when we find it even scienti-

fically correct to deny that Matter has the solidity it appears to have, to conclude at once that there is then no such thing as Matter at all in any form.

This difficulty regarding half-truths occurs over and over again. Take, for instance, her assertion that "food does not affect the existence of man, and this becomes self-evident when we learn that God is our only Life." True it is that He is our only Life, but He has given us a phase, a temporary one, of life which also needs nourishment in its own kind, one suited to this temporary phase, which would come to an end speedily but for the God-ordained suitable means for providing for its needs which we call food.

We could quote instances of this sort from every page of her book, where the taking half-truths for whole truths, or drawing quite illogical conclusions from them, leads to a confusion about truth which cannot fail in the long run to be very mischievous.

But let us take the next chapter for contrasting the Christian way of regarding the physical world and the Christian Science manner of doing so.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRISTIAN TREATMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

We have seen that Christian Science starts with the fundamental principle that "All is One." Christianity affirms this no less, and that all Life is in God. The Eastern religions also affirm this Oneness as the essential principle of Being. But in realizing this great truth, a difficulty always springs up for the thinker, and that is that the spiritual world and the physical seem so much opposed to each other, so extremely different, that it is difficult not to think of them as two quite separate orders of things; and this inclines us to think of the Universe, not as a manifestation of Oneness, but as if it were a dual system, one that in its fundamental basis consists of two separate systems or orders of being. In such case, to believe that All is One seems to necessitate that one order of being

or the other must be declared to have no existence. Either the physical world must be thrown away, so to speak—that is, declared to be totally without reality—or the spiritual must be discarded from our thought as having any reality. Materialists disbelieve in the latter, and, at the time that Christian Science sprang up, in the Western world that was the prevailing idea with many of the thoughtful—namely, that the spiritual, with all that it claimed in regard to the existence of God and of man's spiritual being, was mere illusion and an invention of man's own mind. The one real existence was the physical world, that world which is presented so forcibly through our senses.

The alternative way of escaping from the difficulty is that to be found in the East, and which was adopted by Mrs. Eddy—namely, to deny any reality to the physical world, and to pronounce its seeming reality as due entirely to illusion, to a mistaken way of apprehending things—in fact, to false thinking. And so the intuition that All is One is attained by pronouncing either the physical or the spiritual to be unreal and merely due to illusion.

This dilemma is not, however, a necessary one. For there is a third way of solving this difficulty which does less violence to our intuitions of the spiritual on the one hand, and to our common sense in regard to the physical world on the other, which is to regard the material world as a manifestation of Spirit, as a way in which things present themselves to us when apprehended by means of our bodily senses. Much of our Western philosophy, as opposed to Eastern, treats Matter as at bottom, so to speak, spiritual and as not really totally different nor separate from the mental or spiritual. Christianity does not, as a rule, present the matter in its philosophical aspect, but constantly asserts that the world was made by God. In "Science and Health" it is very definitely asserted that it was *not* made by Him, that it has no connection with Him whatever. "God, Spirit, being all," Mrs. Eddy writes, "nothing is Matter."[1] "The opposite of Spirit is Matter, and the opposite of the real is the unreal, or material. Matter is an error of statement. . . . Nothing we can say or believe regarding Matter is true, except that Matter is unreal and is

[1] "Science and Health," p. 7.

therefore a belief."[1] "Matter will be finally proven to be nothing but a mortal illusion, wholly inadequate to affect man through its supposed organic action or existence."[2] "Matter has no life to lose."[3] "Matter," again she says, "is unknown in the Universe of Mind." "Spirit and Matter no more commingle than light and darkness. When one appears the other disappears."[4] "Is Spirit," she asks, "the source or creator of Matter?" "Science," she answers, "reveals nothing in Spirit out of which to create Matter?"[5] "Spirit destroys Matter,"[6] she continues. "Spirit is the only substance and consciousness recognized by Science. The senses oppose this; but there are no senses, for Matter has no sensation. To Spirit there is no Matter. . . . It is a false assumption. Spirit and Matter cannot co-exist or co-operate; and one can no more create the other than Truth can create Error." Again she writes: "Not a glimpse or manifestation of Spirit is obtainable through Matter. Spirit is positive, Matter is its supposed opposite, the absence of Spirit."

[1] "Science and Health," p. 173.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 171.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Here it is evident that Mrs. Eddy will not allow that there is the slightest relation between Matter and Mind (we use *Mind* here, as she does, as the equivalent of Spirit [1]); and Matter, so far from being a manifestation of Spirit, is in no sense created by it. The two form altogether different worlds (if a nonentity can be spoken of as a world at all), wholly irreconcilable, and hopelessly alien to each other.

How different this from the Sacramental teaching of Christianity in regard to Matter or the physical world. Here we find, instead of a world to be despised, thought away, declared to be nothingness, and as such worse than worthless, a world that is sacred, that "was made by Him," [2] a world in which He shines through His works, which "declares the glory of God," "shews forth His handiwork";[3] where "winds are His messengers and flames of fire His ministers," [4] a world in which God "clothes the grass of the field,"[5] "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,"[6] has "set all the borders of the earth," "made summer and winter," "prepared the light and the sun," [7] and where "the invisible things of Him

[1] "Science and Health," p. 66. [2] John i. 3, Gen. i.
[3] Ps. xix. 1. [4] Ps. civ. 4. [5] Matt. vi. 30.
[6] Isa. xl. 22. [7] Ps. lxxiv. 16, 17.

since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity,"[1] and where He "left not Himself without witness . . . and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons,"[2] and where, the ancient Hebrews realizing this, they called upon all Nature, the sun and moon, the stars, mountains, seas and rivers, frosts and snows, and upon "everything that hath breath,"[3] to join with them in rendering praise and homage to God.

Then comes the central teaching of Christianity, the Incarnation, when "God was manifest in the flesh,"[4] and thus hallowed it and made it sacred. There is no teaching here that the flesh is nothing, though we are incessantly reminded not to live for the flesh alone, but to use it as "the temple of the Holy Ghost."[5] Finally, in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion the physical elements of bread and wine are dedicated to the most divine and spiritual use, as "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we

[1] Rom. i. 20. [2] Acts xiv. 17. [3] Ps. cl. 6.
[4] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [5] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." [1]

Christianity, in fine, treats the material world not as necessarily in opposition to the spiritual, not as nothing, but as a *means* through which the Divine, the Spiritual, may be apprehended, as indeed a something translucent, as it were, through which God is revealed for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

In this comparison we see how infinitely richer and deeper is the Christian apprehension of Matter, of the physical world and all therein contained. It gives us a world of variety as all contained in the One, and a most profound and spiritual depth to our view of the world we find at present around us. We can, when thus viewed, take great joy in it, find all around us beautiful things which perpetually remind us of God, and tend to bring us into closer communion with Him, instead of, as in Mrs. Eddy's teaching, a world we have to contemn and despise, to regard as quite alien from God, and to shrink from as the very opposite of the Spiritual, instead of rejoicing in as a veil through which we get glimpses of God, and of His marvellous

[1] Church of England Catechism.

works. There is all the difference here between nothing (a worse than nothing because, in spite of its nothingness, it leads us into illusion and false thought) and a wealth of variety and beauty seen to be Divine in its origin, if only rightly apprehended ; all the difference between, not the finite and the infinite, but between Nothing and the Infinite! The one view is impoverishing and destructive to us, whilst the other is enriching and life-giving.

However, the outcome is ethically more similar than one might suppose, for, putting aside the bad moral effect of continually trying to deny the existence of things, whilst in action having continually to count with them (a thing that psychologically is known to react very injuriously upon the character), both these differing attitudes of mind in regard to the world and all outward things lay great stress on the supreme necessity of seeking the Spiritual, the underlying true essence of Life, and of care not to get entangled with the material world as if it were the Real, as if it had life *in itself* apart from the Spiritual. All of us, unfortunately, Christians and otherwise, have a great tendency to act from and for the outer world

as if it were all there is, as if it had reality in itself, as if it had nothing to do with the Divine and Unseen. Christian Science warns us off from this by assuring us that the world has no existence, and that in pursuing it we are pursuing a shadow. Therefore we must turn from it altogether. Christianity warns us off the danger by telling us, not to disbelieve in it altogether, but to be careful not to mistake it for an end in itself, not so to see it or to use it as to fail to see God in it, not to make it our first and sole aim. If we lose sight of the Spiritual of which it is a manifestation, then are we lost as regards our spiritual, our higher life; then are we the slaves of Matter and subject to its finite limitations. Christianity says it is indeed "the spirit that quickeneth,"[1] and that the flesh taken by itself "profiteth nothing." How constantly St. Paul describes that to live "after the flesh"[2]—that is, according to it without any reference to the Spirit—is to fall into endless lusts, of which he gives long lists. All the movements of the flesh taken in and for themselves fall into vices: the taking of food into gluttony, of wine into drunkenness,

[1] John iv. 63. [2] Rom. viii. 12.

the need for possessing worldly necessities falls into covetousness, love becomes mere lust. Yet he nowhere declares that these things are nothing, or not necessary to us, but that they have to be used under the influence of the Spirit, our bodies to be made a "living sacrifice,"[1] and we are to live, not in conformity to the world, but as "transformed."

The world, then, is not to be treated as nothing, but to be transformed by the Spirit, as our bodies are also to be transformed. As is the earth taken *for itself alone* "earthy," so are they that live for it alone "earthy."

We find, then, that Christianity urges living by the Spirit as strongly as it can be urged; we might quote endlessly on this point from the Scriptures, old and new. Indeed, the Epistles of St. Paul could be quoted almost *in toto* in this connection. Why, therefore, did the teaching seem so almost startlingly new? As a matter of fact, as already said, so materialistic was the generation which was contemporary with the first beginnings of Christian Science, that to vast numbers the Bible was practically unknown and scarcely read at all. But it

[1] Rom. xii. 1.

must also be acknowledged, alas! that Christians generally, even those who did know and read its Scriptures, had failed much in applying its spiritual teaching to the ordinary affairs of our outward life in the world, and were living incomparably below the standard set forth for us, in an attitude of passive resignation to unhappy circumstances rather than that of active effort to overcome them by faith in the power of God.

It is scarcely too strong to say, perhaps, that even the most earnest Christians were, as a rule, in the habit of regarding the spiritual life and the physical as two almost separate worlds,[1] usually in more or less opposition to each other, the one capable of being sound and whole in communion with God, while the outer man might still be the prey to every evil that comes in its way, succumb helplessly to suffering and disease, be liable to accident and misfortune, and to entanglement in a concatenation of unhappy outward circumstances from which he could expect little relief during this phase of life.

[1] From here to the end of this chapter I quote, with little alteration, from my paper on "Christian Science and Faith Healing," read at the Church Congress, Weymouth, October 1905.

In the past saints have shown, indeed, how splendidly in the power of the Spirit life can be lived in spite of these outward conditions of misfortune, sickness, and misery, and how marvellously and beautifully the inner man can triumph over them; but, as a rule, their teaching has left the *outer* evils to go their own way, at least as far as bringing spiritual influence and help to bear upon them goes, and bodily sufferings which would not yield to physical treatment to run their course, bravely borne indeed, heroically endured, but neither in themselves alleviated nor annulled, nor, indeed, regarded as in any way capable of being acted upon by the spiritual energy within. This produced a dualism, a discord, a kind of divorce between the inner and the outer man, between the spiritual universe and the physical, the latter being left, as it were, still under the dominion of evil, whilst the former might be radiant in the sunshine of the Divine. The new teaching we are considering was a protest against this, an effort, with its emphatic assertion of Oneness, of unity, to get rid of this dualism, a disclaimer of the necessity of such a discord.

It argues that, since spirit lies at the basis

of the entire universe, the goodness and power of God should be able to *penetrate our entire being, the whole of ourselves and of our circumstances, without as well as within;* and that if things are rightly adjusted, the soul being sound and in a state of health, the physical must tend to be so also. It asserts that, instead of an antagonism and warfare between the two, the ideal should be a harmonious working together of the soul and the body, both being creations of one and the same God, the lower taking its tone from the higher, and becoming permeated with the Divine in such a manner that the health and well-being which are the necessary accompaniment of harmony should be exhibited in the body as well as in the soul.

Now, although this is by no means the actual way in which Christian Science expresses itself, yet on a careful digest of its teaching, when one compares its best statements with its worst, and especially when one studies the writings of its more recent and logical exponents, this cannot fail to be taken as its ultimate meaning.[1] And this we believe to be

[1] Although, in order to produce this harmony, it made the mistake of denying existence, even dependent existence, to the body.

the main thing which, in spite of all its drawbacks and its inconsistent and illogical statements, has caused it to meet with such a ready and wide acceptance. Christians have, as already stated, been too ready to accept as inevitable the antagonism between the flesh and the spirit so much lamented by St. Paul, without realizing sufficiently his solution of the difficulty when he speaks of the quickening of our "mortal bodies through His spirit that dwelleth in us."[1] We have too much neglected to avail ourselves of this "quickening." But the Christian Scientists lay great stress upon it and announce it very forcibly, and upon the fact that in the Gospels spiritual deliverance is accompanied by physical deliverance as well, as if the two should naturally go together. The belief of the Christian Scientists is, in fact, a literal belief in what might be called *the life of miracle*—namely, a life so infused with Divine energy that, ceasing to be helplessly tied and bound by the limitations of the physical plane, and especially by the tendency to evil due to its falling away from God, we become capable in the power of the Spirit of manifesting the

[1] Rom. viii. 11.

"mighty works" shown forth in the Gospels as not only worked by our Lord Himself, but also by His disciples.

So far, then, as the *aim* of Christian Science goes, there is little that is inconsistent with the doctrines and belief of Christianity, although in practice the latter has in late centuries not acted so literally upon it as the Christian Scientists endeavour to do. So far as this aspect of their teaching goes, we shall find ourselves at issue with them, not so much in their root idea as in their interpretation of it. Unfortunately, their rendering of this truth has been given with such an entire want of sense and logic, that it sometimes reads as entire nonsense; and a practical and beautiful truth, that of the power of the spiritual over the physical, has thus been rendered almost ridiculous, whilst the minds of Christians in general have been shocked.

The Christian Science retort to our complaint of the entire want of logic and reasonability in their statement would naturally be that spiritual truths are not learnt by reason, and that logic has very little to do with the things appertaining to faith, with which we entirely

agree. But there is a wide difference between acknowledging that religious faith cannot be attained by reason, and in holding a doctrine so utterly at variance with it that all our mental processes of thought in trying to embrace a truth are completely stultified, as when we are asked to believe that there are no bodies nor a physical world of which they form a part.

It is true, indeed, that our Lord's appeal was not to the reason of His listeners, but to that element within them which more readily responds to the Divine; but it is also true that when the reasoning faculty *is* applied to His teachings, they do not resolve themselves into nonsense, nor into such contradictions that when we try to act up to them our daily life becomes impossible or a mass of inconsistencies. But this is what happens to the teaching of Christian Science when reason is applied to it. It is not my purpose here to enter upon the endless contradictions and inconsistencies which this involves, for I have devoted much space to it in another book.[1] I need only point out here that,

[1] "The Truth and Error of Christian Science," published by John Murray.

whilst denying matter *in toto*, they have continually to speak in terms of material things; and, whilst asserting in the strongest manner that there is no body and no necessity for food, for clothing, or for rest, etc., they find themselves continually compelled to act in such a manner as to give the lie to their theory at every turn, to the injury of the sense of truth and of balance of mind.

This belief in the complete non-existence of any material thing is a form of mysticism which springs up from time to time in the course of every few centuries, probably as a reaction against the idea of the ordinary man that what he sees around him and apprehends so vividly with his senses is not only *the* reality, but far more real than things unseen. The discovery on the part of some one of deeper insight that this is not so, and the announcement of it in some popular form, is intoxicating with the fresh realization of spiritual life it brings with it. These sudden revelations of a hidden truth, which in their effect produce what amounts to a conversion, are intensely dazzling, and usually result in a loss of balance, at least for a while. This one aspect of the truth is seen out of pro-

portion to its other aspects—indeed, is realized so vividly that all other manifestations of reality seem to fade away into non-reality. Nothing but the one thing so illuminatingly realized seems true. This is a common experience in any kind of sudden conversion. In the supreme instance of such a conversion on record, that of St. Paul, there is a vague allusion to a long period spent in Arabia, when, the Apostle says, he "conferred not with flesh and blood."[1] May it not be that this pause was necessary for the recovery of balance before he was fit fully to enter upon his great work? Be this as it may, in his teaching he forcibly emphasizes what the spiritual could do for the physical without denying the existence of the physical or failing to count with it in its proper place. We are, as a rule, not wise enough to pause when we have lighted on a great truth so as to recover balance and be able to teach it in its proper relation with other truths. In the discovery of new truth of any kind this loss of balance in judgment is apt to take place, notably in the dazzling discoveries in *physical* science about material facts which often lead scientific men

[1] Gal. i. 16, 17.

to deny that there is anything in existence but Matter. The kind of mystic whom we are now considering does the opposite and denies Matter altogether. What wonder, then, that Christian Scientists, in the extraordinary power with which they have laid hold of the supreme and eternal fact that "in God we live and move and have our being,"[1] are equally dazzled and unable to see things in their true proportions and entirety? Neither is it of any use, in the first flush of it, to talk to them about their inconsistencies and want of balance or reason. It is impossible to gainsay that countless persons have found their lives transformed by it, that they have found a living reality which has changed their aims, their desires, their conduct, their health—in a sense, the very atmosphere about them. Here is the explanation of their imperviousness to all argument and common sense. They will tell us that they have *seen and experienced*, and that in the face of that it is of no use to discuss its reasonability or otherwise with them. Yet in the long run such one-sided blindness to all but the one illuminated spot is mischievous; for in time any

[1] Acts xvii. 20.

truth so misstated is bound to produce reaction and to lose its influence, and to produce certain distortions which tend to bring discredit upon spiritual things and to induce a swing of the pendulum in favour of materialism.

However, rather than too much criticize the Christian Scientists in this matter, let us turn our eyes upon ourselves and see how much we have failed to live outwardly and practically in the light of the teaching so long presented to us in the New Testament regarding these spiritual truths, and there expressed far more powerfully than in any of these modern forms.

There, indeed, it is continually reiterated, and given with the supremely great additional fact that Christian Science seems to neglect, that we can live them *in and through a Person*, in close union with Divine Love itself as given to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, the "only begotten Son . . . that we might live through Him."[1] The life of miracle, life lived by the power of the Spirit, could by no religion be more forcibly urged than it is throughout the Gospels and Epistles, as in such passages as, "Abide in Me and I in you,"[2] "In Him was

[1] 1 John iv. 9. [2] John xv. 4.

life, and the life was the light of men," and "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God."[1] And yet, so much have Christians in general lived below it as to make Mrs. Eddy's call to the living of a life so triumphant over the merely outward life in the world seem to many almost new, and, strangest of all, appear a point of superiority over ordinary Christianity.

The question for us to consider is whether the renewed energy with which Christian Scientists have reasserted the spiritual power of Christianity shall, especially in the matter of healing, be neglected by the Christian Churches, and left to work in an irrational and sporadic manner, and finally to lose its force by overstating or misstating a truth we all believe in; or whether, purged of the alloy with which it has been mixed, rationalized, and brought into line with the acknowledged teaching of Christianity, it may not by it be utilized with potent effect with all the balance necessary for making it a lasting energy.

One of the most serious results which, to the mind of the Christian, flow from the denial

[1] John i. 4, 12.

of the reality of the physical world for those who carry it to its logical conclusion, is the loss of the doctrine of the Incarnation as an actual fact, and the splendid result from it, the *redemption* of the world, the *transformation* of the outward and physical, not its annihilation; and along with it the redemption of man in body, soul, and spirit.

It is impossible to say with any certainty what is Mrs. Eddy's teaching relative to Jesus Christ. She undoubtedly regards Him as the great Exemplar, and accepts His ethical teaching; she speaks of Him, too, as of virgin birth, and says His great triumph was in His resurrection. But her statements are, as usual, confused and contradictory. As she constantly denies that there is such a thing as physical birth, one cannot tell what she means by the virgin birth, and as she equally denies that there is such a thing as physical death, because, as she often asserts, there is no physical thing to die, one can hardly understand what she literally means by the resurrection of Christ, though probably, taken in its mystical sense, she would say that it destroyed our illusion, as she considers it, of death.

But however strained Mrs. Eddy's view regarding bodily death may be, and however curiously she may interpret the triumph over death, doing as she does great violence to our, as yet, constant experience in regard to the death of the body, her treatment of the immortality of the spirit is excellent, and given with such force as to present it with a freshness and vigour which have brought it home as a realizable truth to many who, in this materialistic age, had previously found it difficult of belief—for which let us be thankful.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

So far we have been chiefly concerned with the theory of Christian Science, but we come now to its practical side, that of Mind-healing—to that, in fact, for which the theory, such as it is, was developed; for it was with a view to demonstrating the non-reality of disease that Mrs. Eddy taught her doctrine that no material thing in reality exists at all. But in her endeavour to establish the non-reality of disease she went much further than necessary in order to prove her point. For there is a long distance between maintaining that abnormal conditions of the body may be due to illusion and holding also that healthy or normal conditions, indeed the body itself, are equally unreal and illusory.

Had she contented herself with trying to demonstrate that disease is unreal, this would have been, though still a much exaggerated

assertion, certainly nearer the mark, for she would then have been in accord with the ancient idea of primitive peoples—namely, that of regarding the body in health as in accord with the natural order of things, whilst a diseased body was altogether *unnatural*. So strongly did the ancients think this, and many primitive people think the same to this day, that they attributed illness to magic, to some evil influence of an occult nature. And, accordingly, the evil influence had to be sought out and exorcised by some occult means. Now this is an interesting idea—not that we are at all disposed now to put disease down to magic, but that it should be looked upon as something that runs counter to the natural order of things does seem suggestive of there being some sort of mistake, something more or less illusory about it, which the true and the normal should be able to overcome. And when we once accept the Spiritual as lying at the foundation of our being, the teaching that this deeper and Divine element should be able to control and to set right abnormal conditions of the body, which is dependent upon it for vitality, presents not only a reasonable idea, but one that is even so natural

that it is surprising that such teaching should have seemed almost new and even incredible when given to the world by Christian Science.

All the more so since we have from time immemorial been familiar with the influence of mind over body in all sorts of ways. We have always known that a mere thought can produce a blush, that an idea can cause us to turn pale, that anger in some people can produce a bilious attack, that grief or disappointment may induce loss of appetite, that sudden joy can have the same effect, and that terror has been known to impart unusual muscular strength, and so on. We are again well aware of the fact that change of thought or of ideas will often act as favourably upon the health as change of air will do. And as for the stimulus of new and interesting ideas, the restorative effect of them upon tired and worn-out nerves is often quite remarkable.

All of this we have long known. But of late Natural Science has done much by experiment to bring out still more how marked are the effects of thought upon the body. Experiments in the laboratory have shown that the rate of the pulse, the breathing, and the secretions of the glands change almost from moment to

moment in response to passing thoughts. Well known, too, is it that unhappy thoughts continuously dwelt upon will depress the health and lower vitality even if outer conditions are in every way such as are conducive to physical well-being; whilst hope or despair, thoughts of hatred or of benevolence also play their part, and that a considerable one, in heightening or lowering our bodily health.

Although this is all well known, not enough attention has been paid to it, nor has our moral nature been sufficiently brought to bear upon it; especially instruction as to the ill effects upon the body of indulging in thoughts of envy, hatred, and malice, of revenge, jealousy, and meanness has been lacking, although the damaging effects of these things upon the *spirit* has, let us hope, been duly and carefully taught.

Perhaps it has not been sufficiently well known until quite lately how exceedingly injurious it is to the health and to sanity to turn our attention incessantly to our uncomfortable feelings, our pains and physical distresses, a habit only too easily fallen into during a spell of illness or of poor health. It

is said that the habit of turning one's thoughts constantly on one's sufferings increases the ill-health we may have had the misfortune to fall into by a kind of compound interest, because it actually and physically uses up nerve-tissue, and reduces the stock of nervous energy we might otherwise be able to draw upon.

Christian Science has done much to help invalids from this over-much concentration of themselves upon their symptoms of disease—almost carrying it too far, by producing a tendency to too much neglect of them, as well as by causing real suffering by their want of sympathy. But undoubtedly a good deal of their teaching on this has been in the right direction, although, of course, not believing in the body at all, they have not given this *physical* reason for the ill effects of concentrating attention upon illness.

However, Christian Science claims mentally or spiritually to have far more control over disease than any of this implies, and asserts itself able to cure, not only cases of what we call neurotic illness, but also of severe and deeply-seated organic disease. Unfortunately, Mrs. Eddy gives few instances of very striking

cures in her book, and such as she does bring forward are given without any expert opinion as to what was the matter. It is indeed very difficult to prove these alleged cases of cure; and for this we have to make due allowance, because whenever a striking instance of cure has either really or apparently taken place, it is easy for any doctor to explain it by saying that it must have been a case of wrong diagnosis, and that the so-called cure merely proves that a mistake had been made as to the nature of the disease. It would need a great number of successful cases of healing any given disease, supposed to be necessarily fatal, before this argument could be met, and such a thing as cancer, say, proved to be amenable to Mind-healing to the satisfaction of medical experts or, indeed, of people in general. Then again, of course, it is difficult to eliminate chance and mere happy coincidence.

It is regrettable that it is so difficult to prove these cures. But since many people do frequently find striking results follow treatment of this sort, every day adds to the likelihood that such cases of healing are not merely fortuitous, and that the disease cured was not one

merely existing in the imagination of the patient, nor a case of mistaken diagnosis.

Another thing that adds to the difficulty of getting well-attested cases is that the more deeply reverent the mind of the healer, the more unwilling he is to make any success public; and whilst the delighted patient may be less shy and more willing to talk about it, there is naturally the tendency a little to discount the patient's account of things owing to his not unnatural state of excitement and enthusiasm, though, on the other hand, he is the more likely to be the one who is *sure* of the healing.

Difficult though it is to prove, however, one piece of good progress has been made towards establishing the probability that healing by mental or spiritual processes is a practicable fact, which is that it is now no longer possible to doubt the good faith of most of those who are engaged in this kind of healing. The character of many of them is well established and above suspicion and would be trusted implicitly in any ordinary worldly business. True it is that, in anything that seems to partake of the miraculous (though it may be in perfect accord with laws we are as yet little acquainted with

and therefore not miraculous at all), whilst we may not doubt a person's good faith, we have to allow for the ease with which unconscious self-deception may occur in these cases; but even giving due weight to that, there can be no doubt in the mind of any fair-minded person, who has had experience in the matter, that there are certainly occasional cures of this kind, and very many instances in which great relief has been experienced by sufferers.

Nor is the claim for the possibility of Mind-healing so altogether new, but more ancient instances have been overlooked because regarded as mere cases of superstition with no reality behind them. There are many records of this kind of healing by saints, whose word we trust in everything else, and therefore may give some credence to when they lay claim to healing power. Also there is an implication of Mind-healing in the royal touch for King's Evil. This has long been looked upon as a mere superstition; but it is on record that, in the reigns both of Charles II. and Louis XVI., careful observation was carried out by experts, and it was found in both cases that there was a small percentage of real cures that followed

the touch. There is still a belief in Scotland and elsewhere that the touch of a seventh son of a seventh son has healing power; and a skilled physician has himself verified this, at least in one instance, whilst there are equally well-attested instances of cures by the incantations of a "wise woman." In the pilgrimages, too, to Lourdes for health, it is well established that there is again a percentage of genuine cures, although it cannot claim to be a large one; whilst there are the well-known cures worked by the Curé d'Ars, in the middle of the last century, in his church, to which much attention was given at the time. All this renders the claims of the Christian Scientists that they have brought about many cures without the use of drugs or of any outward means less startling on consideration and more credible than at first they seem to be, as well as the claims of scattered persons here and there who are not Christian Scientists to the possession of a similar power.

It is true that there has been great exaggeration in regard to the large numbers that Christian Science is alleged to have cured; also as to the more or less fatal nature of the

diseases said to have been healed. There have been very many failures, of which some of us know personally, but of which little is said; and therefore whether the percentage of cures is a large one it is impossible to say. Then, again, there have been many instances of temporary benefit only which has not been lasting.

Yet, after weighing the matter carefully and taking all into consideration that one can, it is impossible to deny that there have been many real cures of the sort brought about by Christian Scientists and now also by many orthodox Christians, or to resist the hope that Mind-healing may before long, when better understood and taken up more wisely, play a large part in our lives for good in time to come, and in harmony with our ever-increasing skill in the use of outward means for the recovery of health.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DIFFERENT KINDS OF MIND-HEALING.

THE entire aim of Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health," as we have shown, is to teach the world how to cure disease without the use of drugs, operations, or any other physical means, by simple reliance on the mental or spiritual.

This last phrase brings us up at once against a difficulty. What do we mean by mental or spiritual? Are they the same thing? and, if not, are they equally effectual and equally desirable?

There is little doubt that Mrs. Eddy, whilst not distinguishing between these two words, or what they stand for, did really mean spiritual healing, but it is a great question whether she did not make use in practice of what we should now call mere mental healing.

We have used the word Mind-healing to cover both mental and spiritual healing, using

the word Mind here, as the author of "Science and Health" usually did, in its widest sense, namely, as a word implying the opposite of what we understand by Material—all, that is, that is Psychic or Spiritual, which cannot be apprehended by the senses; anything, in fact, which is spoken of as the Unseen, in opposition to that which is seen.

This is a fair use of the word Mind, if we understand exactly what is meant by it. It is, however, apt to be misleading, since it is often taken for granted that in Mind, or the Unseen, there are no distinctions. Many think that it is all spiritual, all Divine, and therefore all to be absolutely relied upon as perfectly good, and as giving us truth which cannot be gainsaid.

Consequently, there are many who implicitly trust any influences which may come from the Unseen, no matter what their source; anything conveyed to them by automatic writing, by clairvoyance, or clairaudience, by visions, or by a medium during what is called a spiritual séance. All these things are regarded by them as spiritual, if not Divine, in their origin, and as equally trustworthy. But of this more presently.

Although Mrs. Eddy never anywhere, as far as we have been able to discover, gives any account of the constitution of human nature which corresponds with that of modern psychology, her whole system of healing is more or less based upon it. It consists in appealing to the mind of the patient, but to that part of it which lies below the level of our ordinary consciousness. More and more has it become established as a fact that we are much larger than our mere consciousness, than just that part of ourselves of which we are fully aware. There is a region underlying this, to put it very crudely, of which, as a rule, we have no knowledge. This region has been called by various names. Myers calls it the "Sub-liminal self," by which he means that which lies below the *limits* of our consciousness. Dr. Carpenter, one of the earliest to study this region in a scientific manner, spoke of the activities of this unconscious self as "Unconscious cerebration." Other psychologists speak of this, as yet, little understood aspect of ourselves as the "Unconscious mind." Yet others call it the "Subjective mind," using that phrase in opposition to the term they apply to that part of our

mind of which we are directly aware—namely, the "Objective mind," so called because we are in a sense conscious of it as an object. But the term now in most frequent use is that of the "Sub-conscious mind."[1]

We must be very careful not to fall into the supposition that the "Objective mind" and the "Sub-conscious mind" are two separate minds within us. It is difficult to describe accurately, but it is better to think of them as two layers, so to speak, of one and the same mind, or as two departments, or two different phases of the mind. These are unsatisfactory terms, since to use such words as "department" or "layer" of anything so immaterial as the mind

[1] Some psychologists, and notably Mr. J. A. Hadfield, as expounded in his article on "Immortality," object to regarding the aspect of the mind called out under hypnotism as in any sense different from that aspect of it of which we are ordinarily aware, and hold that there is a mere heightening of attention which is concentrated on one set of ideas to the exclusion of others. But this theory does not appear to us to cover by any means all the phenomena manifested under these conditions. We cannot, however, here discuss the question. It does not affect the results of Suggestion whatever theory we hold as to its nature, and should this theory prove the correct one, more than ever will it appear certain that what is reached in spiritual séances, or information supposed to be given by automatic writing, and so on, cannot be regarded as emanating from the spiritual plane.

or spirit must be hopelessly inadequate, and inevitably tend to be misleading. This is a difficulty that always arises as soon as we have to speak of anything mental or spiritual, since all our language has, in the first place, been developed for describing material things, and we can only use them with any propriety for immaterial things—for mind, spirit, ideas, or thoughts—in an allegorical way or as symbols. We must do the best we can.

Although not much understood, it has long been taught that that part of our being which is not physical consists of at least two divisions which Christianity has described as soul and spirit, and we have, therefore, been described as each one of us being tripartite in our nature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. This is a convenient but rather rough analysis, and the Easterns subdivide these divisions again, and represent us as consisting of seven layers, or principles, as they prefer to call them. We need not go into these in detail here, but merely mention that of these seven principles in their teaching the three lower ones have altogether to do with the body. Of the four remaining ones two at least are far below the level of the

highest, and may be spoken of as constituting the psychic plane, whilst the highest of all, and possibly the one next under it, form essentially the spiritual plane.

Our own Western psychology is tending somewhat towards similar results in its classification, though, as yet, very little worked out or understood; but one thing seems pretty certain, and that is, that when we talk of the "psychic" we are not necessarily talking of the "spiritual," but more likely of principles which, according to the Easterns, lie, as it were, between the bodily and the spiritual.

The Mystics of old knew well the difference between these two planes, and how great was the danger of mistaking mere psychic experiences for spiritual ones. Therefore they submitted themselves, or their spiritual directors did it for them, to very severe tests that they might be certain they were in real touch with the spiritual, and receiving, perhaps, valuable revelations, and not merely the victims of hysterical happenings in the psychic plane, which seems to be open to much danger of this sort, or taking for gospel any information that might emanate from a plane very little

more in touch with spiritual truth than their ordinary mind.

In these modern days we are apt to think that if we plunge quite recklessly into the use of any means by which we seem to get into some kind of contact with the Unseen, we are thereby safely in touch with the Divine, or perhaps with high spiritual entities, and that anything thus conveyed to us must necessarily emanate from the Source of all Truth. The distinction is a very important one.

Whatever, theoretically, may be the nature of Hypnotism and Suggestion, the mind of a person in a state of hypnosis is extraordinarily amenable to any thought suggested to it; and, as a rule, acts upon the suggestion almost mechanically, quite independently of the will of the person, and also without his passing any judgment upon the suggestion as to whether it may be true or false. The self we are ordinarily aware of has had all the subject's attention taken from it, and, with its critical faculty, has, as it were, fallen asleep. Not only its critical faculty, and probably its power of will, but even its susceptibility to sensations, have become inactive, the attention of the subject

being so completely removed from the body with its feelings as to prevent his being aware even of very painful operations which may be performed upon him.

If a man be told that he is blind when under these conditions, blind he will be for the time being. He can, by suggestion, even be rendered blind to some things in the room whilst well able to see others according to the suggestions given him. The suggestion made that there is a burn on his arm will produce a burn with the painful symptoms of one, inflammation and rawness, and all the other distressing accompaniments; whilst, on being told that the burn is healed, these symptoms will soon disappear, and the normal state of things be re-established. This obviously opens up a considerable means of possible healing, and it has been found that the suggestion of perfect health, where organs are not performing their due function, has a marvellously restorative effect.

As a rule, the actual hypnotic trance is not now resorted to. Suggestion will often succeed without this. Sufficiently emphatic statements have their due effect when made to a patient whose ordinary mind is in its normal condition

of awareness, if at the same time it be fairly calm and quiescent. Sometimes, even when this calmness is lacking, a suggestion will succeed, if it be sufficiently startling in its nature.

It is this method of suggestion which is mainly in use with the Christian Scientists. They do not always admit this; at any rate, Mrs. Eddy rarely, if ever, uses the word, except to condemn the system. We will not deny that another element may come in, of which we shall speak presently; but, undoubtedly, when the attention of a patient is suddenly arrested by being emphatically told that there is no such thing as sickness, that there is absolutely nothing the matter with her, that she is in perfect health, and can at once rise from her bed and be as usual, it cannot but be regarded as a case of suggestion, and a suggestion of a startling character. In the case of a patient of simple mind whose critical faculty is not much to the fore, such a statement will often produce, even very rapidly, marked improvement; also, apart from its suggestiveness in the technical sense, such a statement acts as a stimulus, and brings in the aid of that powerfully helpful agent hope.

The method of healing by suggestion is what we now ordinarily understand by the name of Mental-healing, as apart from Spiritual-healing, and it will be clear by now that, although it may be a perfectly legitimate way of healing, it does not necessarily appeal to anything deeper than the psychic aspect of ourselves, even though essentially Christian suggestions should be made use of.

There are other cures besides those of the Christian Scientists which are also mainly due to suggestion, to the play of a forcible idea upon the patient, as in the case of the royal touch for the King's Evil, or that of the seventh son of a seventh son. Here it is the idea that the touch can heal which acts as a suggestion. The same applies, at least in part, to such an instance as that of the famous cure of the little niece of Pascal, who, when a Holy Thorn was being exhibited to the faithful, touched her eye, which was distressingly diseased, with it, and was almost immediately cured. A similar case we have known of personally, when a devout young priest was healed of an almost incurable ulcer on looking at the Holy Coat of Trèves. We are not prepared to say that in

these two instances, and others like them, such as those which take place at Lourdes, suggestion is the only cause of the cure, but it forms, at any rate, an important element in it.

It may be asked, and very naturally, why one thing can act thus more than another. Why must it be a king's touch or that of a seventh son, and so on? Why not the sixth or the fifth or fourth? Here other considerations come into play. The king in ancient times was regarded as Divine—still is in some primitive countries. And everything appertaining to him, his clothes, the cup he drank out of, the ground he stepped on, etc., shared in his Divine influence, and could in consequence, according to circumstances, cause life or death to those who came into contact with them. Much more, then, with the suggestion of healing in his and in the patient's mind, would his touch be regarded as all-powerful in producing a cure. The surprising thing is that the supposed healing power should, as time passed on, have been limited to that of one particular disease. In the case of a seventh son of a seventh son, the number seven was in ancient times regarded as having an occult property

which could produce unusual effects. No doubt any other number would have served as well for suggestion, had the idea of peculiar power been attached to it through countless generations. By the time such an idea has been deeply ingrained, as it were, in the mind of humanity, its suggestive power becomes immensely enhanced, the idea being continually passed from mind to mind and from generation to generation.

There is believed to be by some another method of healing which should perhaps come under the head of Mental-healing, although not directly due to suggestion. Some persons claim to be endowed with a gift of healing, generally by touch, in which it would seem as if they were able to transmit some life-giving energy from themselves to other persons. Some speak of this supposed force as Magnetism. There is much controversy upon the subject, the majority of doctors, as yet, disbelieving in any such energy altogether. But less than a century ago they also denied the possibility of Hypnotism, and pronounced it in all cases to be nothing but a fraud. However, there are many others besides doctors, even some who believe

themselves to be very successful Mental-healers, who deny that there can be any passing of vital influence from one person to another. On the other hand, there are certain persons, and we have ourselves met with many, who have a strong conviction that they do actually pass some virtue of a healing nature from themselves to other persons. Some have averred that they felt conscious of possessing the power even before they had ever used it voluntarily, and that so persuaded were they that they had it that, with some reluctance, at last they definitely tried to use it, and found it to be the case. The special advocates of suggestion, those who are inclined to make that cover all occurrences of this sort, of course urge that, in the case of these cures believed to be due to the transmission of some vital energy, it is in reality merely a case of suggestion. These personal healings, if we may so call them, it is true, generally depend upon actual contact, the laying on of hands, or at least a touch, which it is easy to argue may act in itself as a suggestion. And it would be difficult to prove the presence of anything more. It is, however, equally difficult to prove that there is nothing

more, and in the face of the fact that many persons strongly aver that they feel conscious of possessing such a power—persons, too, who have in everything else proved themselves worthy of trust in all they say and do—the burden of proof would seem to lie with those who deny it. There have been several individuals who have so strongly believed themselves to be endowed with healing power of this sort that they have given up all other occupation in order to devote their whole time to healing. They, like others, meet with failure as well as with success, and if there is, as we believe, truth in their claim, it would seem that the power is a fluctuating one, depending upon health and other conditions, and apparently quite beyond the control of their will. Therefore, even frequent failure does not prove that their claim is altogether wrong, nor their belief in the matter a mere delusion. If, by the way, this intermittence were allowed for by those who believe themselves endowed with such a power, much disappointment would be prevented.

Mrs. Eddy believed very much in some influence which could be transmitted from one individual to another, which she called "Animal

Magnetism." But she held it to be altogether baneful and evil, and seems to have had a great dread of it. But as she regarded it as "animal," and no more allowed it to have reality than she allowed reality to the physical in any other form, it is curious that she held it in so much dread. But this only makes one more of the many and strange contradictions in her system.

Finally, we come to the consideration of that which is regarded as more essentially Spiritual-healing than any of the preceding methods of Mind-healing.

That which used to be called "Faith-healing," and which was to a certain extent in use long before Christian Science was heard of, comes under this head. This was limited in the main, at least the name of it was, to a particular school of religious thought. A similar kind of healing by prayer is now resorted to which implies faith just as much as that to which we have just alluded, but is used without the name by a different religious school. There is also Spiritual-healing which especially involves the use of the Sacraments, and is known as "Sacramental-healing." This may or may not include the "Laying on of hands" and the use of

"Unction." The use of these last would be held by some to come more directly under the head of healing due to suggestion, but since these means are always made use of accompanied very solemnly by prayer, and are, especially the use of Unction, performed as a religious rite, even though suggestion may play a large part in them, they must be included under Spiritual-healing. On this ground the healing associated with Lourdes, as well as that of the Curé d'Ars, must certainly be regarded as Spiritual-healing, although, probably, in all such cases suggestion is an element largely present. And why not? The ceremony may be such as reverently to draw upon the highest spiritual influences, and yet suggestion be a means used, an instrument of the spiritual forces.

Obviously, the higher the influences under which healing of any sort can be brought the better, and this applies just as much to the ordinary healing of doctors by drugs and other physical means. We want to apply to the supreme Source of Life for life, and to draw upon this continually for its renewal, no matter what means we employ.

# CHAPTER VII.

## SPIRITUAL-HEALING.

We have endeavoured to point out the distinction between what we understand by Mental-healing and Spiritual-healing. It is an important one, for there is a difference in fundamental principle. The principle primarily at work in the latter is far more directly congenial with the spirit of Christianity than that of Mental-healing taken by itself, since here we find ourselves making direct use of prayer. Instead of trying to act upon the merely psychic in the constitution of man, the effort made is by the use of prayer to draw upon the supreme Source of Life for more life. Whether we have any of us the power of transmitting vitality from ourselves to another or not, it is recorded that Jesus Christ had such a power, the influence exuding from His very clothes,

as when the woman touched the hem of His garment. His very words carried vitality with them. It is probable here that suggestion played its part as a secondary cause; but undoubtedly as one studies His cures, more and more does it become evident that the primary cause was that of supplying fresh vitality to a constitution which, from some cause, was depressed and lacking in vital energy. No doubt suggestion would come in as an instrument in the process of giving a renewal of life.

In healing, where the primary idea is that of drawing upon the very Source of Life, we arrive at a much more profound treatment than that of mere suggestion, and one likely to have much more far-reaching consequences.

Since prayer plays so large a part in Spiritual-healing, it is perhaps necessary to consider the subject a little, since so often is the question asked, "What is the use of prayer? If God is perfect love and knows what we need, why have to appeal to Him in prayer?"

Here we open up a very large subject, which we can only deal with now in a manner far too short for its worthy discussion. It belongs to the general subject of the origin of evil.

It may be equally justly asked, Why do we need to use suggestion or any other means of healing? How does it come about that our bodies are subject to disease, whether it be real or merely an illusion? We can only reply that, whatever the cause, here is the fact that we are apt to be the victims of disease, and, even granting Mrs. Eddy's point that it is nothing but an illusion, still here *is* the illusion, and even an illusion is in a sense a fact, and one that has to be handled if there is to be deliverance from it. We are entirely in agreement with the teaching of Christian Science that God has no part in disease, although we cannot accept the further statement that God has no part in our bodies, and that Matter is utterly alien to Him, as is over and over asserted in "Science and Health." We are most willing to admit that, since God is perfect, in so far as our bodies suffer from disease, real or imaginary, just so far are we alien from God. And it is this alienation from God, whether moral or physical, which gives rise to the necessity of prayer. We cannot account for the alienation, but there it is, acting unfortunately in more ways than one, physically,

morally, and spiritually. And in so far as we are thus separated from the highest sources of life, are we, as it were, blocking out the activities of God within us. It is not that God's love fails; it is that *we* fail in response to it. We are in such case like a jar which might be lying in a river, but if its mouth is stopped up by mud or stones, it remains unfilled by water although actually surrounded by it. Swedenborg likens us to vessels standing under a stream of water to be filled by it, but the vessels have somehow become turned upside down, and receive no more water than if the stream had ceased to flow. Or, to adapt a metaphor of Whittier's, we live with the windows of our souls shut instead of throwing them "wide open to the sun." Prayer is the act of turning ourselves to God, to the source of life, the throwing open of our windows to let in the light and air. It is an act of our spirit, as truly an *act* which may bring about results as the physical act of walking through a door into a garden brings about actual and tangible results. We block out God's energies, and prayer is the act of "liberating these energies;" it is a response we make to them,

by which they can become active within us. In prayer we identify ourselves with the highest, bring ourselves into communion with God, and open up a channel through which His goodness can reach us. And by this reinforcement of our higher self we become capable of resisting those tendencies within ourselves which, working independently of God, have allowed whatever is alien to Him to develop, making more and more solid the block, as it were, by which we shut His presence out. Prayer raises us into a higher condition in which health of body, soul, and spirit can become the rule of our life.[1]

Before leaving this part of our subject, we must allude, though it must be very briefly, to another question which is constantly asked: "Can God alter the course of Nature—can He interfere with its laws, even with such as hold rule in the body?" To this we must reply that there is no interfering with the laws of Nature. Higher laws may counteract them, as we can counteract the law of gravity by the use of a magnet, which contains a still

[1] The best treatment we know of this, and, indeed, of prayer in general, is that of Principal S. H. Mellone, in an article in the *Hibbert Journal* of October 1918, entitled "Prayer and Experience."

more powerful energy of Nature. To lie quiescently and resignedly under the working of the laws of Nature, man has never done since his history began. We have always in more or less degree counteracted the relentless laws of Nature by the exercise of a power stronger still—namely, *the thinking and inventive powers of man's mind.* We have so harnessed all those laws that we know of, that we can to a great extent direct their power as we will. Into the concatenation of the natural laws of cause and effect man introduces another factor, a factor which alters the conditions and therefore produces different results; and the new condition is, as previously said, the thought of man. The very fact of prayer is a new condition brought in which can liberate the spiritual forces, just as our intellectual thought can bring into play a force unknown before, such as electricity, an energy which, as far as man was concerned, lay practically dormant through countless generations. We—each individual of us—are apt to let the spiritual energies of the universe lie dormant and unused, and prayer is the spiritual movement by which we can avail ourselves of them.

Prayer then, we find, lies at the root of what we have called more essentially Spiritual-healing. We have, however, yet another difficulty to encounter, and that is the statement often made by those who advocate that suggestion covers all mental, moral, and spiritual phenomena of every sort, namely, that after all prayer is a sort of self-suggestion, and answers to it are to be looked upon in the light of successful suggestions. But we have to bear in mind, to begin with, that suggestion really explains nothing. The "Why" of it is extremely obscure. Why does a mind react to suggestion? Why, when there is an extreme concentration of attention upon one idea, does it result in such implicit obedience to what is suggested? In ordinary study, especially in mathematics or metaphysics, the mind, although in its normal condition of awareness, has the power of very intense concentration, as any one who has worked in the higher branches of either of these subjects must know; it is scarcely possible to conceive of more intense attention than has to be focussed upon problems in these subjects, and yet the critical faculty is not laid to sleep, is not rendered ineffective, but is capable

of judging and reasoning upon the object thus so concentratedly thought of. We do not believe that the theory of concentrated attention covers all the facts of suggestion, nor that it explains its phenomena. It makes us perhaps understand *how* some things work, but not *why*. And then, again, suggestion in no sense claims to call upon fresh supplies of vitality. It calls such vitality as may be present into action, but does not necessarily draw upon more than is there.

The results upon the character, too, of mere self-suggestion and of prayer are wholly different. In the one case there is a reference to one's self only; in the other there is reference to a Being other than one's self upon whom we are dependent for life, whose supplies are inexhaustible, and who in meeting us in our prayers, and supplying our felt needs, inspires us with deep gratitude and love, with a feeling of unutterable reverence and with a sense of inspiration which no mere reference to one's self could draw out. In regard to this question let us quote Principal Mellone's words in the article already referred to: "The truth seems to be that, instead of reducing prayer to a process of

self-suggestion affecting our own spirits merely, we must see in prayer a deepening and development of the unexplained power of self-suggestion which we see every day. . . . Our lives must be continuously dependent on the Divine Life of the universe; but its inflow varies in abundance and power in correspondence to variations in the attitude of our own minds." *Faith* is one of these "attitudes," which might be best defined, perhaps, as the response of our deeper self to truth which presents itself to us through an intuitive channel which is other than the senses, a response to that which we cannot see or handle with any of our five senses or with reasoning therefrom. To some these unseen truths, although the reason and the senses cannot deal with them, are more vivid and real than anything presented to us through the senses regarding the physical universe. It was undoubtedly so with Mrs. Eddy, however much she may have bungled (which is scarcely too strong a word for it) in her interpretation of it. To countless Christians it is so also, as well as to almost any genius, as described by Wordsworth, Tennyson, Ruskin, and innumerable others, many of whom tell us

how in their childhood even they felt aware that this world is a mere outer manifestation of an infinitely deeper reality which is unseen.

Faith, then, is the attitude of response to these deeper realities, and by faith it is, accompanying our prayers, that the Supreme Life is called upon for replenishing our being.

But this is no reason for refusing the use of suggestion as an instrument, just as on the purely physical plane we make use of food for nourishment, although this without our share in the true Life could not in itself keep us alive, as Mrs. Eddy very truly says—only, in the case of food, she seems to think the *instrument* unnecessary. She makes great use of the instrument of suggestion, however; so much so, that to many it might easily seem as if she ignored the higher means of prayer—a point we must go into.

As already said, the Christian Scientists make use of very startling and arresting suggestions, such as that disease and pain are absolutely non-existent; that we are victims of an illusion; that there is no such thing as Matter in any form, therefore no body to feel pain, and so on.

Christians of the orthodox sort, when making use of Spiritual-healing, also avail themselves largely of suggestion as a secondary means, even when, as in the case of Christian Scientists, they are not professedly doing so (for suggestion comes in very often when it is not recognized as such, of that there is no doubt), but they make use of very different suggestions from those of the Christian Scientists. They use very much better ones, because they do no violence to common sense or reason, and therefore do not arouse the critical faculty, which, when it is aroused, interferes with the response to suggestion. It would be useless to announce, however forcibly, to a person with a much developed reasoning power that he has no body—he knows he has one; or that he is not suffering pain—he knows that he is in pain; and Christian Science suggestions of this sort, therefore, necessarily fail with countless persons. Christian healers, instead of announcing that there is no such thing as a physical world, lay stress upon the *transforming power of the spiritual in its action on the physical*, as taught by Christianity; or they speak of the *redemptive power of Christ over the body as*

*well as of the soul.* Such assertions, put in simple language, are quite as arresting as any that can be made by Christian Science. Christianity has endless sources to draw upon for helpful, true, and beautiful suggestions. The Psalms abound with them if we had not fallen into a rather mechanical way of saying or singing them without much regard to their meaning; or if, even where we do pause on their meaning, we had not generally thought of "the great things" that "the right hand of the Lord" can do for us as applying to our souls only, or to our circumstances—to everything, in fact, except to our bodies and our health, of which more presently.

It is needless to say that the Gospels and Epistles are full of promises of life and of what we may be actually here and now, which, when accepted and realized, act as the most powerful suggestions possible. Christianity, then, has nothing to learn in regard to suggestions except to make use of them, which we are now learning to do.

The question arises, Does Christian Science use suggestion only—does it never soar higher than the psychic in the means it uses? At

first sight, it does not seem as if they made a very direct use of prayer, but it is impossible to say that it does not recognize the Spiritual as the great reality of the universe. And the mere realization of it, in the very vivid manner that they do realize it, is in itself a means of drawing upon the Spiritual. This realization of the Divine and Spiritual is what the Christian aims at when he absorbs himself in meditation upon Divine matters, when he is seeking communion with God. To "think on these things"[1] is to develop that part of ourselves which is able to respond to the highest things.

It is a truism that "like calls out like," and more and more is it being realized that we tend to become like that upon which we set our hearts. We draw into ourselves the influences we allow ourselves to think about. If we continually devote our minds to earthly things, we shall become more and more "earthy," blocking out higher influences, while the spiritual part of our nature not only lies dormant, but becomes atrophied until it may seem almost dead. It is persons in whom this is extreme that St. Paul describes as "dead in trespasses and

[1] Phil. iv. 8.

sins,"[1] and for whom he so urges the quickening power of the Spirit in Christ. But to realize that, we must turn away from worldly things, cease to make these our aim and the object of our affections, and by prayer, by a total alteration of our attitude of mind, make room for this quickening power.

To induce people to do this Christian Science tries to create, as it were, a distaste for external things by pronouncing them to be unreal and a delusion; and this undoubtedly with some acts very effectually. Christianity does not go so far as to teach that they have no reality and no worth at all, but that they have no life, no reality, in themselves, and pursued for their own ends in and for themselves, can only lead to death. This world must be used "as not abusing it,"[2] and we are to be "not fashioned according to this world."[3]

Both Christianity and Christian Science realize and teach that to put ourselves into *rapport* with the highest things is to grow like them, is to develop that within us which has

[1] Eph. ii. 1.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 31. The margin gives "not making full use of it," as if it were the only aim and object.

[3] Rom. xii. 2, R.V.

a true relation with them; and for this prayer and meditation are necessary. The Christian Scientists make more use of the latter than of the former, especially do they make little use of the prayer which is petition.

The meditation which they teach has a character of its own, which is peculiarly helpful, and which, in conjunction with the form of meditation more in use with the ordinary Christian, may have very powerful results. Whilst the latter urges us to focus our attention altogether upon God, the former urges that attention should also be given to the contemplation of one's self as an ideal being. And this they especially recommend to an invalid whom they are attempting to restore to health. They tell him to consider carefully the constitution of his true being, to realize that he is in the foundation of his nature a spiritual being, and that being made "in the image of God,"[1] he has a share in the Eternal, in the Divine; and that, as such, his essential, his spiritual, his ideal self, if it were duly developed, would be perfect; and that in communion with God he can become whole in health, as well as in

[1] Gen. i. 26.

mind and spirit. To think of himself as whole is to make himself tend to be so. He helps himself in this by making affirmations or denials: "He is not suffering;" "he is quite well;" "he derives his being from God in whom is no imperfection, therefore he has in reality no imperfection;" "his ideal self, himself viewed under the aspect of the Eternal, is perfect;" "he has no pain, no fatigue, no distress: these things do not exist in God, therefore they have no place in him"—and so on. We Christians would state it a little otherwise, but undoubtedly may learn with much advantage a somewhat similar way of meditation with its accompanying healthful suggestions. We should put it that in communion with Christ we become perfect in Him; that "His strength is made perfect in our weakness;"[1] that "His strength is sufficient for us;" and that "things present and things to come,"[2] all are ours.

It is difficult to lay too much stress upon the importance of fixing our attention upon that which we wish to become like, and upon remembering that we tend to grow like that which we think about. If we look down, like

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 22.

the man in the "Pilgrim's Progress" who had the muck-rake, with his eyes always upon the ground, we shall find ourselves, like him, scarcely able to look upwards; whilst, if we direct our eyes upward upon that which is pure and beautiful, we tend to call out and to develop the same in ourselves. Thus "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,"[1] "we shall be like Him."[2] Where it is difficult to pray with faith, this form of meditation is a very powerful help towards it; it is, in fact, a very *realizing* form of prayer. Bearing in mind, too, that the Eternal knows nothing of past and future, is not limited by Time, but is *here and now*, it is wonderful what the effect may be of realizing "my ideal self, as viewed from the Eternal point of view, is perfect; in Him it knows nothing of jealousy, envy, uncharitableness, of irritability or anger, of suffering or pain, or disease, but shares in all respects in His perfection." Such thoughts may act doubly, as suggestions of the best kind, as well as inducing the tendency to become like that which we look upon. Undoubtedly Christian Science has

[1] Heb. xii. 2. [2] 1 John iii. 2.

been instrumental in helping Christians to make a more vitalizing use of its great truths, and to realize more vividly by this form of meditation such statements as that we are "children of God," "joint heirs with Christ,"[1] and that, as such, we have a very living share in Reality itself, in the Divine. Christian Science can furnish no more powerful or beautiful or true suggestions than such as these. We are far from saying that Christians have not in all ages practised meditation of the finest sort; but ordinary people have now had this sort of realizing prayer more brought home to them by Christian Science and by those who pursue what they call the "Higher Thought."

Anything that can help us to have a vivid realization of the things of the Spirit helps to call out faith, the right soul-response to them. Some orthodox Christians have found in a somewhat similar way that they can make this leap of faith by the habit of giving thanks at the end of a petition as if it were already granted, thus realizing that God's gifts are independent of time and are already present. They need but to be called out.

[1] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

Mrs. Eddy speaks of her methods as scientific. Truly all these things are more scientific than at first sight they appear. And in this connection we will quote again from the article by Principal Mellone already referred to. "The universe is so constituted," he says, "that if we learn and obey its laws, we receive its treasures. Our natural and scientific knowledge suggests of itself that there are resources around us which, if we could lay hold on them, would enable us to achieve what is as yet beyond our dreams. Science assumes that the latent resources are no more than physical energy. Our interpretation implies that they are not only physical, but also mental, moral, and spiritual. If Nature says to the discoverer and the inventor, 'Obey me, learn of me, have perfect confidence in me,' much more are the unrealized treasures of the mental, the moral, the spiritual world offered to us on like terms. There are resources available to build up the character, the moral health, the spiritual happiness of all who seek their co-operation by fulfilling the conditions through which alone their virtue is obtained"—and we should add to "moral health," *physical* as well.

"Prayer for spiritual good for ourselves," continues the article, "if it is genuine, must mean the identification of self with an ideal desired; for it becomes an act of will. It is impossible to deny that such petitions have a spiritual effect."

This assertion that prayer is an act of will is interesting, since it is evident that in the kind of meditation we have laid stress on here it is not mere passive meditation, not a mere "emptying of the mind," a thing some mystics enforce as necessary, but is a truly active state of soul. No doubt the more passive, what we might call rather a *listening* form of meditation has also great results, especially for those in a state of spiritual advance, whose wills are already disciplined in the right direction.

One thing is very important in any kind of Mind-healing, and that is not to watch nervously for signs of the results. There should be no incessant examination to see if there is improvement. This would be concentrating our attention upon ourselves, which is above all things hurtful to our health, both spiritual and physical. Self-centredness is fatal. After treatment in any of these forms of healing the

whole subject should be left, and something entirely different attended to and thought about where this is practicable.

The prevention of self-centredness is, however, only one reason why examination of results should be avoided. A profound psychologist,[1] who knew much of the sub-consciousness long before it was studied by Myers and others, arrived, after much experience, at the conclusion that the activity of the subliminal self should be left to itself and as little interfered with as possible. Attention consciously given hinders its working. She used to say that one must consciously start the line of thought or the suggestion one wished the sub-conscious to work upon, then leave it, and occupy one's self with something else—with any interest one might happen to have in hand. Most especially was it well, she taught, to start the suggestion at night just before going to sleep. Many psychologists teach this now. And in practice the usefulness of this has long been known, if not in theory, as is evidenced by the common phrase "to sleep upon a thing" that bewilders

[1] The late Mrs. Boole, widow of the logician of that name. This psychological teaching is scattered throughout her too-little-known works.

or puzzles us, and many there are who bear witness to having awakened in the morning with the difficulty cleared. It is no mere figure of speech "to sleep upon a thing," as many have supposed, for the sub-conscious mind unquestionably works without our being aware of it both when we are awake or asleep, but much more in the latter state because not interfered with by conscious attention.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## INTERCESSION.

In the last few pages we have been speaking mainly of self-suggestion, and of the development of our own individual spiritual nature, but we must now consider our efforts for other people. It is easy to understand, as far as the subject is to be really understood at all, how suggestion can work upon others; perhaps to influence others by it is even more easy than self-suggestion. But in the matter of prayer for others, and of meditation for others, it is not so easy to understand how it may act. And this brings us to the problem of Intercession. Meditating upon and bringing one's own higher self into evidence may be one thing, but can we thus have any effect upon others? Many ask this question.

Here, again, we shall find the principle that

"like calls out like" comes in, and also the fact of the solidarity of human nature. We are all parts of a whole, we all share in the life which we derive from the supreme Source of Life, and thus we are all in touch, a very living touch, with each other. It is, of course, a truism that we can influence each other for good or evil. Spiritually we are in a vital relation, and it is through this that we can most help each other, and far more efficaciously than we can do through merely physical means. No one doubts that we can help each other in outward and material ways, and yet there are many who think that here our power of giving aid to others stops short, although, indeed, it would be an anomaly if we could not help each other in every aspect of our being, as well as in the merely material aspect. We will again quote from the article in the *Hibbert Journal*, already cited more than once, for it states some of these things so succinctly. "If God is the Soul of souls, aspiration to God is to a centre where the issues of all lives meet. Founded on this faith, prayer as *intercession* is the endeavour, by means of our communion with God, to benefit another."

Being thus in a living relation, realizing in thought the ideal personality that lies, perhaps, quite hidden and dormant underneath the imperfections of some one in whom we are interested, tends to call out the ideal in that other, just as meditating upon our own perfection as regarded in its eternal aspect—as seen in Christ, as we should prefer to put it—tends to bring the attributes of our own perfection into manifestation, to the more or less annihilation of our imperfections. Like calls out like. To persist steadily in trying in thought to dwell upon the best in another and not upon his worst, those who have tried it can testify has the most astonishing effects. It need hardly surprise us. We know how "a soft answer turneth away wrath," and how anger brings out anger. We call out of a person that which corresponds with our own frame of mind, although it is strange how little heed the best of us pay to this most evident fact. This does not mean an unintelligent blindness to the faults of others. We must recognize the faults if we are to think them away, as it were; but it means seeing through them to the ideal which they are hiding. We have to "believe

all things," to "hope all things," to "think no evil" in regard to another. Thus do we tend to call out the best. Christian Science, in such treatment, teaches that we should utterly deny sin or sickness in another. This is going far, and yet when we realize that there are actually present in another, although lying dormant, all the perfections which should be manifest in him, it amounts to much the same thing, but calls out the good without doing violence to our sense of truth. We regard the imperfections as there, but believe them to be destructible by being left no room for when the better qualities are called out.

However, whilst intercession for others is not only a legitimate thing, but also a most desirable one, great care has to be taken not to impress our own individuality upon another, not to invade his own personality, which is sacred to him, nor to try to enforce upon him what *we* may think right. We want him to realize his ideal self, his perfection as regarded in the light of the eternal, but we must not attempt to prescribe for him exactly what that may be. We must not enforce our own notion of right upon him. It is what is right for *him*

we want to call into manifestation. We must leave it to the all-wise God to know what his individual perfections are, and to develop the characteristics which should be the outcome of his particular temperament. We must not *will* him to do this or that, or even to be this or that. He has his own type of character, and the duties to perform and the virtues to develop which are consonant with that. All we have any right to do is to help call out all that is perfect within him without attempting to enforce our own, perhaps, mistaken notion about it. Mrs. Eddy, although in so much unwise, was truly wise in this matter, and always urged there must be no enforcing of oneself upon another person, and, above all, carefulness not to convey one's own imperfections to another. She recommended a thinking of one's own self away, if one may so put it, a sort of emptying of one's self, before endeavouring to act on another, whether for his health or for any other purpose. A newly-converted Christian Scientist once asked another, "As my maid wants to leave me, and her loss will be to me so great, shall I affirm that she stay with me, and deny that she shall leave?"

"No, certainly not," was the answer. "How do you know that it is best for her to remain with you, or best even for yourself? You must affirm or pray that the right thing may happen, whatever that may be, for both of you."

In this connection, it must be mentioned that it cannot be denied that Christian Science, in spite of its teaching relative to the non-reality of material things, develops a tendency to dwell very much upon outward and physical prosperity, and this would be likely where the method in use is so largely little more than suggestion, and where there is not necessarily any reference to spiritual ideas. Far be it from us to say that this is at all general, but some of their literature decidedly conveys this impression, where wealth and pleasant outward things are sometimes much dwelt upon. In Christianity the constant reference to a Divine personality necessarily lifts one on to a higher plane, where spirituality and the Divine perfection of God are kept constantly, in the very nature of the case, in sight.

There has always been an accusation made

against Christian Science that it lays sometimes almost exclusive stress upon bodily health rather than upon spiritual, and with some truth, though it would be unfair to make this accusation too general.

# CHAPTER IX.

## SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND BODILY HEALTH.

We have spoken little in any direct manner of Sacramental-healing, especially in regard to the Sacrament of Holy Communion, on the ground that all who are accustomed to it use it experimentally far better than we can describe it here. But its use, along with other spiritual means of healing, gives rise to a question not unfrequently asked, which is, How is it that so many deeply spiritual persons, and especially those who make a frequent use of Holy Communion, are so often invalids, or, at any rate, so much subject to many little bodily ills which, whilst not incapacitating them, cause so much inconvenience and discomfort, whilst at the same time we see persons who manifest little spiritual development in the enjoyment of good health ?

This question involves a somewhat complicated answer, since there are probably several causes which contribute to the fact. In past times the answer has generally laid stress on the sometimes very beneficial results that spring from sickness and suffering. Nor can this reply be altogether set aside, although it fails now to give us anything approaching satisfaction. There is, of course, some truth in it, since undoubtedly many thoughtless individuals have become serious, have awakened to the higher aims of life, and in some cases developed a highly spiritual character when laid aside by illness from the ordinary pursuits so attractive in the world. But, on the other hand, it is equally impossible to deny that countless persons become altogether soured and embittered under prolonged suffering. And there is no case recorded of Our Lord's refusing to heal on the ground that disease was good for any person brought under His notice, nor any word in His teaching that implies that, unless one include sickness as implied in "taking up our cross." It is true that in the persecutions He warned His followers that they might have to bear, very severe bodily suffering was included; never-

theless, to judge from His constant habit of healing any case of sickness that was brought to Him, it is clear that He looked upon disease as abnormal, and as an undesirable aberration from the normal. And we have until lately certainly very much overdone our resignation to illness on the ground that it does us good. The better way of looking upon it in this connection would be to grant it as undoubtedly an evil, but that, as in the case of other evils and misfortunes, good can be brought out of it. Having befallen us, God can redeem it and bring good out of it, as it were, rather than leave it to work itself out as unarrested evil.

Therefore, on the whole, we cannot rest contented with this answer to our question, that disease is appointed for us by God for our good.

A more satisfactory answer, at least up to a certain point, is that the more highly developed any being, the more refined and the more complex his constitution, the more easily is he put out of gear. We know this is so in the case of machinery ; how much more, then, in the case of beings pulsating with life. This, there-

fore, may partly account for ill-health in those of a high spiritual development.

But probably the bodily evils so often endured by such are still more due to their indifference to their bodily condition, and to the fact that, whilst habitually and diligently drawing upon the Source of Life for their higher needs, they entirely neglect to do so for their physical needs, even such as are willing to make much use of the skill of the ordinary physician. But since we believe that "bodily health is ultimately the outcome and the expression of spiritual health," [1] or as already mentioned in a former chapter, since spirit lies at the basis of the entire universe and the power of God should therefore be able to penetrate our entire being, physical as well as mental and spiritual, how is it that, when so diligently seeking to draw upon God for the spiritual life, and receiving it, it fails to flow into the bodily expression of ourselves? In drawing upon Life surely it should permeate every part of us. The fact is that, in neglecting to include our physical self when in any way or by any process we

[1] *Guild of Health Quarterly* for Michaelmas, 1918. Article on "The Place of the Sacraments in Spiritual Healing."

endeavour to obtain aid for our spiritual life, we create a barrier—an invisible one, it is true, but none the less a barrier—which hinders the flow of Divine life within us. We leave our body in thought outside altogether—we leave it to go its own way, as it were; it does not make part of our "intention," or has not done so with most in any marked manner until lately. In consequence, this region of ourselves remains more or less impervious to the inflowing vital influences.

Until recent years it has been supposed by ordinary persons that thought was too ethereal to be able to present a barrier to anything. But we have now learnt that "thoughts are things," and that this has been realized by people in general we certainly owe in large measure to Christian Science. This went to lengths even absurd in teaching that physical things have no reality and are not things at all; but its contrary teaching, that thoughts *have* reality and *are* things, is quite invaluable. It has, at least, taught us to realize it in a way we did not before, and the unspeakable importance of our thoughts in their influence upon our life both moral and physical.

The moral influence, it is true, has been long realized, but its physical very little until lately. A thought can make a barrier as impenetrable as any solid wall can do; witness the effect of a "fixed idea," which, if it possess a person, can act as a barrier which may make him absolutely impervious to all reason, and even to the evidence of outward facts.

Thus, it follows that if we allow ourselves to believe that our bodies are not of sufficient dignity or importance to be brought under the influence of the flow of spiritual life, that thought becomes a block through which these influences cannot easily penetrate, and so in their influence they stop short, to put it rather crudely, as soon as that barrier is reached. The realization of this and the including of our body as being in need of fresh supplies of vitality as well as our spirit, will probably in time work quite a revolution in general health.

# CHAPTER X.

## CONCLUSION.

We have found one very strong point of agreement between Christianity and Christian Science —namely, that which lies at the foundation of both, the belief in God as the Supreme Unity, in the "Allness of God," as Mrs. Eddy expresses it. This has always been taught by Christianity and by all its different Churches and sects. The saints have always sought for this unity, and for union with God. It is useful to have this great foundation truth emphatically restated from time to time, since we have only too great a tendency to forget it, and to act as if there were two quite separate worlds, a physical one and a spiritual. But the unity as taught by Christianity is very different in its conception from that taught by Christian Science. The latter arrives at the realization of it in thought and belief by throwing away all

of what we call the manifold, or, as some put it, the "maniness" presented to us by the universe. It is difficult, as already stated in a previous chapter, to combine in thought the idea of Maniness with that of Oneness, to see in variety an underlying or all-embracing unity. Yet when we speak of union, what do we mean? Do we mean a Oneness bereft of all variety, a universe in which all is One because there is nothing to unite? This would be no unity at all—a sameness which would be equivalent to nothingness—an empty unity, if we can use the word where there are no differences to unite. How impoverishing is this thought! How profound its contrast with the Oneness of Christian teaching, a Oneness which embraces within itself every possible variety, all the varied richness of our infinitely diversified world, of all that may be contained in a universe vaster to infinity than anything we can comprehend or conceive, a unity in which every particle is related to every other particle, and yet without swallowing up the individuality of each, since each one has its own little difference, and yet without loss of its vital relation with all. The Oneness of Christianity is a God

who manifests Himself in every possible variety, and expresses Himself in a universe so rich in diversity that in countless ages it would be impossible to exhaust its riches or its infinitely varied revelations of the Eternal and All-embracing God. Viewed thus, the universe shows itself as one vast poem in the mind of God, revealing Him in every minutest change, whose beauty, as evidenced in Nature, in His Immanence, is intoxicating, whilst what it faintly suggests of what He must be in His Transcendence is beyond all power of thought or imagination. What a contrast with the teaching that all the universe is nothing, and that the world is altogether outside of and without God!

To apprehend some of the main points of difference in doctrine and theory between Christian Science and Christianity, it may be helpful to place them in parallel columns,[1] although this can be nothing more than a somewhat crude comparison. Of the difference in the idea of Oneness we have already spoken, so will not mention it again.

[1] This contrast is taken from my pamphlet, "Christianity and Christian Science," published by the S.P.C.K.

| Christian Science. | Christianity. |
| --- | --- |
| Denies the existence of Matter; states expressly that there is nothing in common between Matter and Spirit. Matter is an illusion we have created for ourselves. | Matter is a manifestation of Spirit, therefore shares in its reality, but is wholly subordinate to it. |
| Therefore the outer world has no reality, is only a result of Man's false thinking. If we could quite disbelieve in its existence, it would disappear. Mrs. Eddy denies that God has anything to do with it. Hence the outer world is of man's creation, and is left destitute of God. He is altogether transcendent to it. | The world was created by God, and He is immanent in it as well as transcendent to it. |
| Consequently, Nature has nothing to tell us about God. | Nature speaks to us of God. He is in it, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. "Consider the lilies;" "the Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork." |
| Our bodies likewise are denied existence, and, like the outer world, are a delusion arising from our false belief. God neither created them nor has any part in them. | The body is a manifestation of the spirit of each individual, which owes its origin to God. The body has been especially hallowed since Christ "took our flesh upon Him." It is the "temple of the Holy Ghost," |

Evil, also, in all its manifestations, is non-existent, a result of false belief. Its peculiar development called Sin is equally the result of false belief. Deny it, and it will cease to exist. There is no occasion for forgiveness.

Disease is also a delusion, a result again of false belief. Disbelieve in it, deny it, and affirm health, and all ailments will disappear.

All kinds of suffering, whether entailed by poverty, misfortune, ill-health, or by anything else, are unreal, and useless even if granted to be real. They ought, under no circumstances, to be found in the experience of any one ; nor should any sympathy be shown in regard to them, since they are not real.

to be treated with reverence, not ignored as non-existent.

Evil is so terrible a reality, especially sin, that nothing less than the Incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh could conquer it. Through the Cross of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection sin can be pardoned and the sinner redeemed, made a new man. God can transmute evil and bring good out of it—a process continually going on.

Christ healed by calling out the energy of God and imparting fresh vitality.

Christ wherever He went mitigated sorrow and pain, and showed profound sympathy with the sufferer; but He neither refused suffering for Himself, nor invariably shielded His disciples from it: "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup." Suffering having come into the world, God makes use of it to bring good out of evil, redeems by means of it, of which the supreme instance is the Crucifixion of Our Lord.

There are many more points on which we might draw out the contrast, but these are the most essential as far as doctrine is concerned, and enough to show us how thin is the theory of Christian Science as compared with that of Christianity; how incomparably more profound in the teaching of the latter is its treatment of Spiritual things, of mankind, and of the universe.

Nevertheless, we may frankly confess that we owe to the former the revival of the belief in the possibility of healing by spiritual or mental means. It is no new discovery, as we know. It was practised in the early days of the Church, and although it fell almost entirely into disuse after the first few centuries, yet it never entirely died out. It lingered on in the Faith-healing of the Protestants, and in the reverence for relics and of certain shrines which, combined with prayer, acted as a powerful force in suggestion of the Roman Catholics, not to speak of the healing power of some of the saints, and of persons of very highly spiritual development like the Curé d'Ars. And, indeed, amongst such there had been a recrudescence of healing power before the

days of Christian Science. Still, the revival of this sort of healing on a large scale, and its wide acceptance amongst people generally, we undoubtedly owe to Dr. Quimby and Mrs. Eddy.

Must this most desirable kind of healing be limited to Christian Science, and to the various schools of thought which have branched off from it? Many have thought it was so limited, and countless persons have become Christian Scientists in order to avail themselves, if possible, of this Mind-healing. But this is entirely unnecessary, and Christians of all denominations are now realizing, and have done so for some time in an increasing degree, that Spiritual-healing is a power of which Christianity can avail itself to the full, and, as we believe, far more effectually than Christian Science, since in union with Christ (who is to us far more than an Exemplar), in abiding in Him, we are able to lay hold on a spiritual, a living dynamic energy which is truly the Way and the Life.

And in the use of what we regard as a secondary means, that of suggestion, Christianity is not one whit behind in the forcible

ideas it can handle for suggestions, these having again the advantage, since they are of a kind that works in harmony with the reasonable part of our nature, instead of doing violence to it and acting in direct opposition, whilst Christians acknowledge as fully as Christian Science does that reason alone cannot enable us to realize spiritual truths.

There are now many Christian Guilds and Societies formed for the study and practice of Mind-healing in all its forms, in the hope that this revived power, purged of the irrational teaching with which it has been mixed up by the founders of Christian Science, and brought into line with the acknowledged teaching of Christianity, may be utilized with all the sanity and balance necessary for making it a lasting accompaniment of the spiritual life.

We have to remember that the subject, in many of its aspects, especially in that of suggestion, is comparatively new, and, as yet, the results are not as marked as one might hope for. Even where this sort of healing is accompanied by such powerful adjuncts, both spiritual and mental, as are to be experienced at Lourdes, the number of cures are allowed to be but a

small percentage. It is impossible to say what may be the proportion of lasting cures relatively to the cases attempted by Christian Scientists, or by such as claim to have a special gift for healing, or by any of our Guilds, but undoubtedly there are many disappointments. This need not occasion discouragement when we consider that as yet we are in general very materialistic in our thought, and that a bad habit of thinking acts as a direct barrier in this sort of thing as in everything else. Many mistakes, too, are likely to be made at first. The handling of what we call the "sub-conscious" is attended with many dangers, some of which we scarcely fully realize; and, as we have already stated, it is easy to mistake the merely psychic for the spiritual, and to follow paths that may be both misleading and unsafe, as well as disappointing. But as mankind becomes, as we hope, more highly developed spiritually, there is good reason to anticipate that as there may be incalculable moral growth, so there may be a revolution in our outward and physical well-being as well; and that mankind will manifest himself as a sane and harmonious whole, where health prevails

throughout his entire being, spiritually, morally, and physically, and when it shall be no misnomer to describe him as "made in the image of God."

THE END.

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